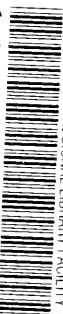


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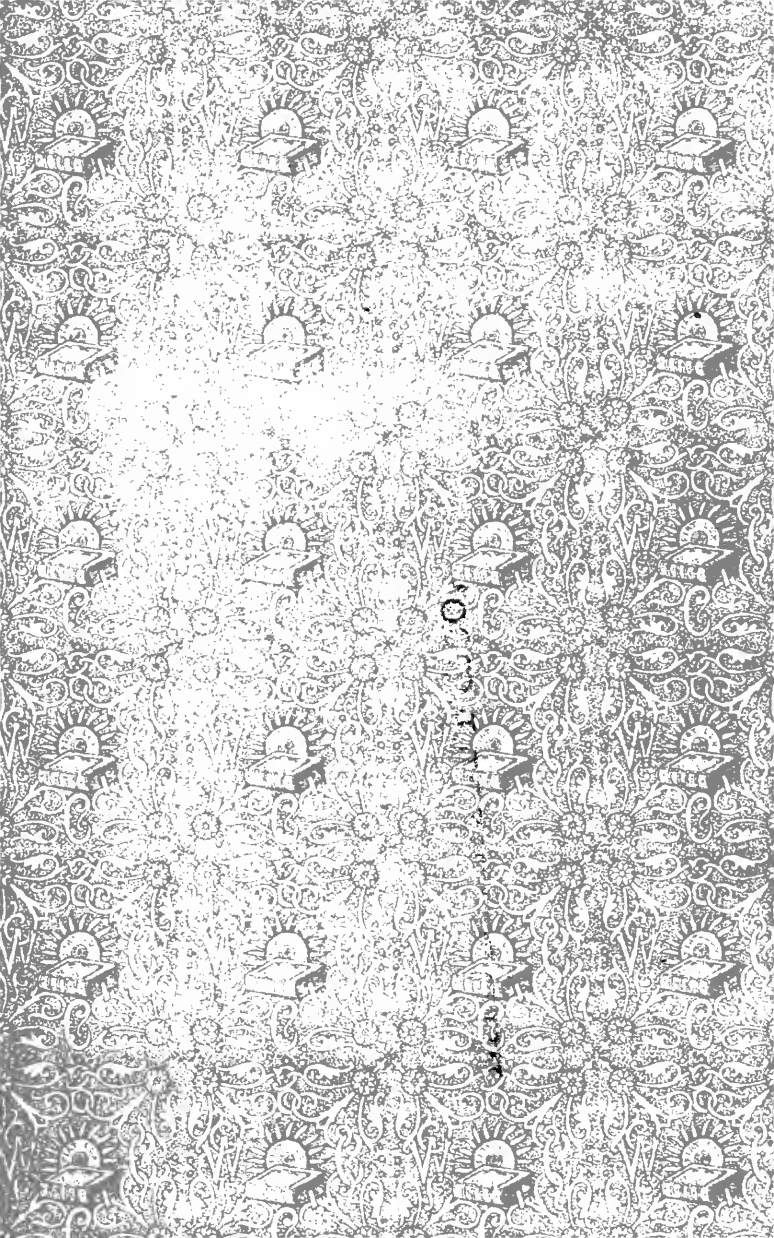
*The Green Leaf and the Gray.*

*Poems*

*L. P. Irvine*



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J. P. Grover was editor of  
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in Washington D.C.

Mrs. Ina Allen Ryder,

with the best wishes

of the author,

A. D. Irvine.

Kirkwood, Ills. May 1891 -



ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P.

THE ❖ ❖ ❖

# GREEN LEAF

AND ❖ ❖ ❖

# THE GRAY

❖ POEMS. ❖

BY . . . .

J. P. IRVINE \_\_\_\_\_

ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P. ALPHEUS A. L. P.

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TO

HENRY W. ALLEN

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THE BEST OF FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS,  
I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME.

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## PRELUDE.

### I.

**I**N the spring when leaves are green,  
And the bud unfolds and blushes,  
And I from my window lean  
Out into the blue serene,  
List'ning to a pair of thrushes,  
Pouring forth their witching strains,  
Sweet as tingling silver chains  
At the breaking of the morning,—  
I forget the restless night ;  
And, half tipsy with delight,  
Linger long and turn again,  
Wistful, just to catch a note,

But I lack the sylvan tongue,  
Far too fine for words, and hung  
Tuneful in a golden throat:—  
Still, it is not all in vain—  
All for naught my bosom swells ;  
And within me all the bells  
Of rapture take the time and swing,  
Till I cannot choose but sing ;  
And that sweeter strains, I know,  
Tinkling through my numbers run,  
And from sun-lit zephyrs spun  
Brighter threads of color glow:—  
And, I may have caught, perchance,  
From the rhythm of the dance  
Of airy dapples on the grass  
A lighter measure ; still, the voice  
Is not the thrushes'—not, alas,



The hymn that makes the vale rejoice ;  
But, when leaves are green in spring,  
And delight is on the wing,  
Somehow, one is prone to sing.

Be it so, will any hear—  
Any pause upon their way,  
Turning an arrested ear?  
Is there aught of love and cheer  
In the green leaf of my lay?  
If so, in the singer's throng  
There will still be room for me;  
Rhyme has run its way too long,  
Fond hearts never tire of song  
Nor the world of poesy.

## II.

In the fall when leaves are gray,  
Winds are lain, and vales and hollows  
Flanked with hills in blue array,  
Seem to drift in dreams away,  
And the barns are mute from swallows,—  
Distance mellows, and you hear  
Through the drowsy atmosphere,  
Sounds as soft as murmurs are—  
As of waters falling far  
In the lonely mountain glen,  
And at times, the pheasant's drum  
Rolling muffled, once, and then  
All the woods around are dumb.  
Howe'er, when the sun is low,  
And the shadows lengthen tall  
In the evening of the year,

And the gray leaves turning sere  
From the boughs begin to fall;—  
Steals a voice unto my ear,  
Oft repeating one low strain,  
Subtly plaintive ; and although,  
Just a voice and nothing more—  
Just a still and small refrain,  
Without words, that one may hear  
All the day long in the rain,—  
Somehow, it becomes the key  
That awakens memory,  
Till she joins and sings of yore—  
Sings so of the long ago—  
Chords responding heart to heart,  
Till my themes are but a part  
And an echo ; and if tears  
'Twixt my lines have left a trace,

Eyes were wet in other years  
For a loved one's absent face ;  
For the playthings left in place  
Of a darling gone its way—  
Flow'ret of a summer's day;  
For a sash hung in the hall—  
Dim with dust of twenty years—  
Yet the rent made by the ball  
Through the darker stain appears.  
Thus it is, whate'er is mine,  
Oh, my friend, I know is thine;  
Fate is common, though unseen,  
Walk we all the self-same way ;  
In the spring the leaves are green,  
In the fall they're just as gray.

Yet, will any cease their quest,  
Turn and listen from their road?  
As the dove a coveret nest,  
In some warmly welcome breast,  
Will my gray leaf find abode?  
If so, in the singers' throng  
There will still be room for me;  
Rhyme has run its way too long,  
Fond hearts never tire of song,  
Nor the world of poesy.

## AT THE PASTURE BARS.

RETURNING lonely from the field,  
She met me at the pasture bars ;  
The moon was like a golden shield,  
The firmament was lit with stars.  
As morning dawn her face was mild,  
As evening, so her limped eyes ·  
God never gave a sweeter child  
For weary man to idolize.  
So winsome seemed her artless mirth,  
Her soft caress and ardent kiss;  
I thought of all delights of earth  
The angels sure will covet this.

I know they mean to do no ill,  
But whom they love they lure away ;  
Good angels, love her as ye will.  
But leave her with me while I stay.—  
Just as she is, for I would set  
The hand of time behind an hour,  
If that would stay a little yet  
The bud from blowing to the flower.  
But when at length we homeward went,  
The fragrant azure shone so clear,  
The great familiar firmament,  
I thought, had never seemed so near.  
Se near, the moon above the trees  
An airy globe of silver swung ;  
And in the dewy tops of these  
The stars in mellow clusters hung.

So near, that I could scarce forego  
The thought that one who longing waits,  
Might hear them singing sweet and low,  
Of love beyond the golden gates.



A SHINING ONE.

STAY, oh stay, sweet dove of heaven,  
Yet a little, let me be  
At thy feet a yearning suppliant,  
Let me kneel and question thee:  
For I know thou art enraptured  
By the glory of thine eyes,  
And the whiteness of thy raiment,  
Thou art here from Paradise.

Hast thou seen the daintiest angel  
In all heaven? Is she fair?  
Has she grown in radiant beauty,  
Are her foot-falls light as air?

Did she smiling run to meet thee,  
    Were her kisses sweet and bland?  
Through the open gates of jasper  
    Did she lead thee by the hand?

Has the flash of time between us  
    Quickened darkness? does she know  
Of the cruel grief that smote us  
    When our hope was changed to woe?  
Is it true that the Immortal  
    Is unshadowed by the Past,  
That the burthen of remembrance  
    At the door of Death is cast?

There was one of twenty summers—  
    More than twenty years ago—  
In the vanguard of the battle,  
    Fell with face unto the foe;

He was truthful, he was tuneful,  
And he wore the blush of spring ;  
In his sanctified perfection  
I should love to hear him sing.

Is the rapture born of heaven  
So complete, there's naught remains  
Of the earth-life's bitter sweetness,  
Of its pleasures or its pains ?  
Are you touched with our emotions ?  
Are the dear old voices dumb ?  
Do you ever long to meet us ?  
Would you love to have us come ?

Draw near me now, make answer ;  
Let me touch thee, feel thy breath ;  
Reach thy hand and I will clasp it  
Half across the dark of death :

Just a moment, and no longer,  
    Would I lure thee, if I could,  
Though we grieved so when you left us  
    And put on your angel-hood.

'Tis enough that I have seen thee,  
    Gentle spirit, heavenly dove ;  
And I know thy silent presence  
    Is to tell me of thy love:  
Yet I would not have thee linger;  
    Stay no longer, rise and go,  
Lest a touch of earth should tarnish  
    Thy unsullied wings of snow.

THE BELLS OF KIRKWOOD.

IT is eve, and the coming and going  
Of cares, since the gray of the morn  
Are at rest, and a harmony flowing  
From the village comes over the corn ;

As a song o'er the sea when the breakers  
Are acalm from their turbulent swells,  
Soft winged o'er the manifold acres  
Flows the sound of the beautiful bells.

And behold, as I list, my behavior  
Is softened, as come unto me  
Sweet thoughts of an infinite Savior,  
On eternity's deep Galilee.—

24      *The Green Leaf and the Gray.*

Of the evening my lifetime is bringing,  
    With a calm that shall woo and enfold  
As a garment of peace, of the ringing  
    Of bells in the city of gold.

## FEVER.

STAY near me, sweetheart, clasp, caress  
My hand thy soft white palms between,  
Stay all the night, that I may lean  
On thee my whole weight's weariness.

Fold, fold me close unto thy breast,  
I am *so* tired; sing sweet and low  
Your love-songs of the long-ago;  
O sing away the night's unrest.

Sing soft, and ope the window full  
On yon great woodland, white and still,  
In pallid moonlight on the hill,—  
It is so deep and dim and cool.

But God is good, my dear, and when,  
    Across the dewy fields of corn  
    Shall blow the healings of the morn,  
I shall not be so weary then.



THE LIGHTNING EXPRESS.

I.

SWIFT as the wind's untrammelled  
speed,

A train of chariots, all a length  
Of splendor rolls behind a steed  
With loins of iron and the strength  
A legion horses; and as breaks  
The noise of trampling hoofs, and shakes  
The solid earth, he thunders past,  
Outpouring on the riven blast  
His notes of warning, shrill and loud,  
Through vapors rolling cloud on cloud,  
In purple-bordered volumes ; yea,  
In storm and darkness, night and day,  
Through mountain gorge or level way,

With tightening rein and might unspent,  
And head erect in scorn of space,  
Holds, neck-and-neck, with time a race,  
Flame-girt across a continent.

## II.

Think not of danger, every wheel  
Of all that clank and roll below,  
Rang singing answers, steel for steel,  
Beneath the hammer's testing blow:  
And what, though fields go swirling  
round,  
And backward swims the mazy ground,  
So swift the herds seem standing still—  
As scared they dash from hill to hill;  
And though the brakes may grind to fire,  
The gravel as they grip the tire,

And holding, strike a startling vein  
Of tremor through the surging train,  
The hand of him who guides the rein,  
Is all controlling and intent:  
Fear not, although the race you ride  
Is on the whirlwind, side by side  
With time across a continent.

## TWO KIDS.

I KNOW of a home in the village near,  
Where two little children are treas-  
ured dear.

A sweet little girl who betrays her grace  
In the delicate lines of a Raphael face ;

And a rogue of a boy, who can barely  
walk

By pushing a chair, and they say he can  
talk.

Set square on his feet and firm at the  
knees,

He stands like a sturdy young Hercules!

God grant that he grow to manly estate,  
And the path he may climb be narrow  
and straight.

But the girl is a daisy—a mischiev'us  
lass,

Who tosses me kisses whenever I pass,—

Tosses them laughing, and standing alert,  
Tempts me to chase her—the gay little  
flirt;

Catch a weasel asleep—why, she flashes  
away

If I move but a hand, like a mirrored  
ray.

And wouldn't I scamper, if I were she,  
From a great, big bearded fellow like me !

God grant that howe'er in that fullness  
of time.

She bloom into womanhood's beautiful  
prime.

And yet, little friends, I utter my prayer  
With a falt'ring regret for the ills you  
must bear.

For the loss of the sweetness of innocent  
trust,

For the truth without guile and the love  
without lust;

For the laughter that ripples and runs  
and is glad,

In exchange for the smile from a heart  
that is sad.

But pardon, sweet children, I fear I do  
wrong,  
For the sigh that I drop with the notes  
of my song.

Play on and laugh loud, we rejoice in  
the sound;  
You're the gayest young kids in the neigh-  
borhood round.

*This poem was dedicated to  
J. A. Ryder in 1885.*

## REST.

DEEP broods the night on land and  
sea,

As bent and lame I homeward creep,  
And fondly lay me down to sleep,  
Through all the night-of-years to be.

It is the sleep that lasts for aye,  
The balm that heals the hurts of all:  
My heavy eye-lids droop and fall,  
And all my being swoons away.

O friend, come grant me one request,  
Make wide the confines of my tomb,  
I am so weary, give me room  
To lie full length in blissful rest. —



Full length, as on a folded fleece  
    Around by curtained darkness hung,  
    Till healed forever and made young  
For that new world where all is peace.

## THANKSGIVING.

## I.

HE is of all the gracious Lord,  
Before His throne we bend the knee  
And lift our voice in grand accord,  
As swells an anthem of the sea:  
We praise Him for His mercies done,  
The crystal fountain from the springs,  
The life reviving, shining sun,  
The winds with healing on their wings.

## II.

Our cup is full: a thousand scents  
From hampered garner fill the land;  
Like countless towns of golden tents  
The stacks of wheat in clusters stand;

The meadows glow with aftermath,  
In heaps the gathered apples shine,  
And lowing homeward down the path  
With burdened udders file the kine.

## III.

Thus unto Him, our gracious king,  
With banners of our faith unfurled,  
Ten thousand times ten thousand sing  
The fullness of a gladdened world;  
For Him our souls in fervor burn,  
Our life, our love and all are His,  
At best, alas, a poor return,  
So boundless His abundance is.

## MY LITTLE GIRL UNDER THE SNOW.

I AM standing alone by the window  
Looking out on the infinite gray,  
As it deepens and darkens to silence  
At the close of a desolate day:  
There's a lull in the sleeting and raining,  
And now in the stillness I know —  
As the flakes feather aimlessly down-  
ward —

That all the night long it will snow.

And lo, as it falls in the valley,  
In the deep, still woods and the sea,  
There's a fall, as of flakes, in the dark-  
ness

Of the life that God gave unto me;

For the clouds have been heavy and rainy,  
But now there's a lull, and I know  
That my sorrow is soft'ning to longing  
For my little girl under the snow.—

This night, for my poor little darling,  
In her little grave under the leaves,  
Only dressed in a shroud of Swiss-muslin,  
Cut low at the neck and the sleeves;  
For she died when the manifold lilies  
Were a-bloom in the garden below,  
But the meek little face in the coffin  
Was as mute and as pure as the snow.

And now, I remember, while thinking,  
How a year ago — this very night,  
That she and I, here by the window,  
Stood watching the snow-birds alight;

And coaxingly calling she fed them  
With little white pellets of dough,  
But alas, did I think that my birdie  
Would sleep to-night under the snow.

But why should I weary with longing,  
When to cease, if for e'en but a day  
Or a night, would be proof of forgetting;  
Ah, sorrow, stay with me, I pray;  
Stay with me, that I may be humble  
And patient in bearing the loss  
Of the dear little idol that keeps me,  
So near to the foot of the cross.

THE JUDGMENT MORNING.

I.

WHO may reckon of the coming  
Of the solemn Judgment Day,  
When the sea shall roll no longer  
And the earth shall melt away?  
But we know the spinning planets  
Through their wonted measures run,  
Just as on the natal morning  
When elanced around the sun;  
And when we have been forgotten  
And the things we know are gone,  
Through a hundred future ages  
They will still roll on and on;

Till at last shall come an evening—

Just as other evenings come—

But a spell of deeper silence

Shall arrest the busy hum ;

And the sun, before his setting,

Pause and turn a ling'ring view,

Fondly backward, as if bidding

Earth and time a last adieu ;

And at midnight all the army,

Of the stars in bright array,

With the moon adown the heavens,

Will forever go their way ;

And I fancy all the living

Will in heavy sleep be lain

And a hush of awful stillness

Till the coming dawn shall reign.



II.

'Twill be startling, in a moment,  
In the twinkling of an eye,  
Swift and loud a herald-trumpet sound  
Shall break athwart the sky,  
And a host of shouting angels  
Shall on gleaming wings descend,  
White and vivid as the lightnings,  
When in wrath they strike and rend.  
'Twill be such a sound as never  
Echoed since creation's birth,  
'Twill reverberate throughout the length  
And breadth and height of earth,  
And shall quicken and awaken  
All the dead that lie beneath,  
Who shall rise, as He of old arose  
Triumphant over Death.

Oh, my fellow men—my brothers,  
     Count the sands upon the main,  
 Count the waves that break between them,  
     Tell the drops of summer rain —  
 But a host no man can number,  
     Far and wide on every hand,  
 With the grave's dust shaken from them  
     Shall the risen myriads stand.  
 There they'll be in countless numbers  
     From the mighty centuries past  
 Though their dust a thousand summers  
     May have winnowed to the blast:  
 They shall rise from arid deserts,  
     From the everglades and woods,  
 From prairies vast and lonely  
     And from mountain solitudes:

There will be no sea so fathomless,  
Nor wide nor tempest toss'd  
But shall cease its restless roaring  
And give up the loved and lost.

III.

Meetings, aye, I know there will be,  
Though mayhap you have lain alone  
In the potter's field a stranger,  
You will stand amid your own;  
How within his arms a daughter  
Shall a yearning father press,  
How a mother in her rapture  
Will a tender child caress.  
It may be the blue-eyed darling  
Who was lost and never found,

It may be the little truant

Who went swimming and was drowned;  
And of mine, a precious idol

Who, when taken, broke my heart,  
Yet I know that I shall meet her

Though a thousand miles apart;  
It must just be as I left her

In her old-time childish grace,  
Ere the heavenly radiance touch her

I must look into her face:  
Yes, it must just be as we left them —

Ere the death-damp on them lay —  
For the grave's sweet Balm of Gilead

Shall have healed their hurts away:  
Yes, it must be that we shall greet them —  
As of yore in love again —

Elsewise, heav'n would not be heaven

And the hopes of earth be vain:

That the old love in its fondness

Still will linger, is not strange;

It may be the new is stronger,

But the old will never change,

Till transfigured with the dawning

Of the new, we shall arise

To the home of many mansions

In the mount of Paradise.

## THE MAYFLOWER.

DEC. 11, 1620.

I SEE her on yon boundless world —  
Gray-winged and tempest tossed,  
The foam-plumed breakers beating in  
And thund'ring on the coast;  
The Indian yells, the eagle screams  
And breaks the wild repose,  
A light is on the wilderness,  
'Twill blossom like a rose !

An hardy handful land ashore —  
An hundred, age and youth —  
A band of Christian Alchemists  
To test the gold of truth; —

The vanguard of a mighty host

The coming years should bring,

Who should kneel before no master

Save to God, their sovereign King!

## MY TWO WHITE DOVES.

SOMEWHERE between the great extremes

Of mortal life, to-day I stand,  
And muse and wonder — as in dreams —  
A white dove clinging to my hand,—

A wee white dove with azure eyes,  
Yet still, I wonder through my tears,  
How far it is to Paradise, —  
I know the past is forty years.

For lo, in Paradise have I  
Another dainty dove like this,  
Who some day in the by-and-by  
Will greet me with a seraph's kiss.



How far the great Beyond may be,  
I know not, there's no hint nor sign;  
Will I first 'tempt it, or will she,  
This wee white, nestling dove of mine?

If first for me the still, small voice  
Of death should call, I'll humbly go;  
Between my doves I make no choice  
For Oh, my God, I love them so!

But fleet the years that roll on earth,  
A little while and she will come,  
And she who gave my white doves birth,  
Till all the loved are safe at home.

## FOR THE BACK OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

THE brush may err but not the art  
That paints with sunbeams; here  
you trace

The very thoughts upon your face,  
So clearly cut in every part

And well defined in every grace  
The subtlest feature, unconcealed,  
Your living presence stands revealed.

TWO TOWNS.

**M**<sup>Y</sup> cottage crowns a knoll of land,  
And peering upward through the  
green

Of maple boughs — on either hand  
Its dormer-windows may be seen.

And there it is when looking down,  
The season long in sun or rain,  
You see a thrifty neighbor town  
At either ending of the lane.—

A narrow lane and travel worn,  
From lagging wheels and feet that tread  
A-weary with the burdens borne  
Between the living and the dead.

Though scarce a furlong either way,  
     In one I hear the robins sing,  
 And in the other all the day  
     The smitten anvil's measured ring, —

All day I hear the champ of drills,  
     The roll of trains and engine-booms;  
 The low, incessant grind of mills,  
     The muffled pounding of the looms.

Meet whom ye will, there's none but seems  
     Pursuing some elusive quest, —  
 Two fretful, counter-passing streams  
     That never know a moment's rest.

The streets may climb the rugged hill,  
     Or straggle outward to the plain,

But wind and wind the way they will  
They lead at last unto the lane, —

The narrow way we all must pass —  
How soon or late there's none may  
know,  
Our quiet homes beneath the grass  
Are always ready when we go.

## A PSALM OF TRUST.

**B**E near me when I die and lean,  
Your head above my bosom low,  
Remembering dear, the long ago  
And all the golden years between.

For arm and arm through cloud and sun,  
As lovers long, we hither came, —  
In life and death we are the same,  
And humbly pray His will be done.

For well we know his mercies are  
As sweet and all-abundant now,  
As when at first we made the vow  
To trust Him truly, near or far.

Nor would we change our destiny,  
Nay, even though we had the power:  
Our parting will be scarce an hour  
Compared with all the years to be—

But scarce an hour, then why forlorn,  
'Twill be as though my way I took  
At night across a silent brook,  
And you came over in the morn.

## MYRRH AND FRANKINCENSE.

DEC. 25.

THERE'S morn in the land when,  
from lake unto lake,  
And from ocean to ocean, the people  
awake  
To the pealing of bells, and the hills all  
ashake  
From the shots of great cannon: 'Tis  
Columbia's voice  
To come forth and lift banners, beat  
drums and rejoice  
In a heritage dear to the sons of the free.

And again, there's a day when, on  
suppliant knee



Bowing low, we give thanks, and arising,  
outpour  
Sweet hymns and grand anthems for a  
bountiful store  
Of the cluster and sheaf, for the herds on  
the plain,  
For the dews and the balms, and the sun  
and the rain.

But the day when all peoples in all  
of earth's climes  
In glad exultation sing psalms and ring  
chimes,  
Wreathe their homes in green holly, give  
gifts and make mirth,  
Is the glorified one of our Lord's lowly  
birth,—

The day that brought peace and good will  
unto earth,—

Brought peace and glad tidings song-  
winged, and a light

To relume the deep darkness of Error's  
long night,—

Brought healings for anguish, and a  
balm for all woes,

From a fountain so brimm'd with sweet  
love it o'erflows

In a hundred full streams.

Oh, then let us pray,  
Giving thanks, let us sing, let us dance,  
blessed day!

Let us meet and clasp hands and rejoice  
that we live,

And if aught have estranged us, forget  
and forgive,

And our gifts, let them come from the  
heart's proffered store;

Let us go through the land and unlatch  
every door

To the huts and the hovels where dull  
squalor pines,

And where Want never laughs and the  
sun never shines;

Let us clime to lone attics, go down to  
low dives

And the dark slums of death in the tene-  
ment hives,

So dark that one needs light his way  
through the halls,

There is slime on the floors and mildew  
on the walls;

There are women so haggard and with  
faces so gray

One fears to gaze on them, and in pain  
turns away.

There are mothers with infants that hang  
uncaressed

Like limp and forgotten wet rags on the  
breast;

An e'en the half-grown are so shrunk  
and so lean,

And with hands so like claws, they look  
old and unclean!

But enough, they are legion — these  
hungry and gaunt

Hapless wretches in tatters — these children  
of want

And of vice and distress — 'tis enough,  
let us go

And relight with our smiles their dark  
hour, and bestow

The white loaf and rich cluster, place  
beneath the sick head,

With a touch, the soft pillow, and ease  
the straw bed;

Stir aglow the dead embers, bar out the  
sharp cold,

And enwrap the frail forms of the helpless  
and old,—

If for e'en but a day, that they may not  
forget

There are hearts that still beat with warm  
    charity yet,—  
Just to ease but one moment the chasten-  
    ing rod,  
Just a taste of the sweets of the goodness  
    of God.

O, thus it is well we're akin unto all,  
And alert to respond to distress at her call;  
And well we are touched with the grace  
    that is kind,  
For there so many lame and there so  
    many blind,  
There are so many waifs, little-bodied  
    and thin,  
Standing out in the cold, looking wist-  
    fully in;

Aye, so many wee forms that are naked  
and chilled,

So many wee stockings that are hung  
and unfilled:

There are so many wives waiting late in  
dull homes

For a step that is weak and outworn  
when it comes:

And there so many friendless and lone  
in the land

Who but want a kind word or the clasp  
of a hand.

O, it's easy to bind the bruis'd reed,  
and to bow,

Pressing soft the cool palm on the pain-  
smitten brow;

And it costs but a farthing to pause and  
to feed

The poor, little, starved mouths that are  
gaping in need;

And still less to take hold an unsteady  
man's arm —

Though mayhap he's been drinking,  
'twill do you no harm,

So it's easy to help, and withal, we are  
told

That the blessings, rained down in re-  
ward, are ten-fold;

And thus it is well we are touched with  
a chord

Of the love reaching forth from the heart  
of our Lord.



AT NEW YEAR'S DAWN.

AT New Year's dawn a poet wove  
A tinkling rhyme in divers keys:  
Behind him lay the darkened hills,  
Beyond him rolled the purple seas.

And time is young and time is old  
He made the glad and sad refrain,  
Sweet mingling each with each as fall  
The glinting sunbeams and the rain.

And time is young and time is old,  
And nimble feet aweary grow,  
As round and round the seasons roll  
The woodbine and the cypress blow.

Aye, time is young and time is old,  
With Him who marks our joys and tears,  
A thousand years is but a day,  
A fleeting day a thousand years.

IN THE COUNTRY.



SUMMER DROUGHT.

WHEN winter came the land was  
lean and sere:

There fell no snow, and oft from wild  
and field

In famished tameness came the drooping  
deer,

And licked the waste about the troughs  
congealed.

And though at spring we plowed and  
proffered seed,

It lay ungermed, a pillage for the birds:  
And unto one low dam, in urgent need,  
We daily drove the suppliant, lowing  
herds.

But now the fields to barren waste have  
run,  
The dam a pool of oozing greenery  
lies,  
Where knots of gnats hang reeling in  
the sun  
Till early dusk, when tilt the dragon-  
flies.

All night the craw-fish deepens out her  
wells,  
As shows the clay that freshly curbs  
them round;  
And many a random upheaved tunnel  
tells  
Where ran the mole across the fallow  
ground.

But ah! the stone-dumb dullness of the  
dawn,  
When e'en the cocks too listless are to  
crow,  
And lies the world as from all life with-  
drawn,  
Unheeding and outworn and swooning  
low !

There is no dew on any greenness shed,  
The hard-baked earth is cracked across  
the walks;  
The very burrs in stunted clumps are  
dead  
And mullen leaves drop withered  
from the stalks.

Yet, ere the noon, as brass the heaven  
turns,

The cruel sun smites with unerring  
aim,

The sight and touch of all things blinds  
and burns,

And bare, hot hills seem shimmering  
into flame !

On either side the shoe-deep dusted lane

The meager wisps of fennel scorch to  
wire ;

Slow lags a team that drags an empty  
wain,

And, creaking dry, a wheel runs off its  
tire.



No flock upon the naked pasture feeds,  
The sheep with prone heads huddle  
near the fence;

A gust runs crackling through the brittle  
weeds,  
And then the heat still waxes more in-  
tense.

On outspread wings a hawk, far poised  
on high,

Quick swooping screams, and then is  
heard no more:

The strident shrilling of a locust nigh  
Breaks forth, and dies in silence as  
before.

No transient cloud o'erskims with flakes  
of shade

The landscape hazed in dizzy gleams  
of heat;

A dove's wing glances like a parried  
blade,

And western walls the beams in tor-  
rents beat.

So burning low, and lower still the sun,  
In fierce white fervor, sinks anon from  
sight,

And so the dread, despairing day is done,  
And dumbly broods again the haggard  
night.

A JUNE MORNING.

AYE, sing I must, ecstatic June,  
Such morns the charms of Eden  
bring,

Untouched the bells of rapture swing  
And all my being breaks in tune.

As well restrain the roundelay  
Of yonder golden-throated thrush,  
Keep still the wren, or seek to hush  
The hymning waters on their way.

I know the world is tired of rhyme,  
But melody is ever new  
When heard amid the plashing dew—  
The subtle scent of mountain thyme.

Ah me, I fear a breeze may blow,  
Or cloud may cast a passing screen;  
O winsome morn of bloom and green,  
I would that thou might'st never go.

BEFORE THE RAIN.

WHEN yestermorn upon my early  
route

To fetch the cows—far up the hollows  
found,

I knew 'twould rain; a myriad frogs were  
out

And all the marsh a sheet of crackling  
sound.

The sky was naught but one blank waste  
of gray,

The rank skunk-cabbage clumps were  
dull'd to blurs,

And on the knolls, a furlong's length  
away,

A gorge of gloom arose the silent firs.

Dim lines of moisture all the night had  
    crept

Out-wid'ning from the edgings of low  
    sloughs,\*

And wheresoe'er a passing hoof had stept  
    There lay a seeping puddle of dark  
    ooze.

The clumsy cows grazed lagging as they  
    went,

The bell, trailed muffled, struck a  
    dull refrain,

And ere we knew, the misty world was  
    blent

In one dark lowering raiment of gray  
    rain.

---

\* I give this word the western pronunciation.

A SULTRY NIGHT.

THE night swooned in a sultry lull,  
And as we drowsed around the  
doors,

We heard away across the moors,  
A lonesome dog bark faint and dull.

Then all was dumb: bats swirled about,  
Glimpsed through the dusk; mosquitoes  
bit—

The smudge of chips against them lit  
Flamed wanly once and flickered out.

Above the aspen tops entwined  
The vapory moon hung half concealed;

The flame-lit cloud at times revealed  
The darker borders of the world.

Retiring then we slept till morn —  
It thundered deep—the curtain stirred,  
The big drops fell, and then we heard  
The deluge breaking on the corn.



INDIAN SUMMER.

AT last the toil encumbered days are  
over,

And airs of noon are mellow as the  
morn;

The blooms are brown upon the seeding  
clover,

And brown the silks that plume the  
ripening corn.

All sounds are hushed of reaping and of  
mowing;

The winds are low; the waters lie un-  
curled;

Nor thistle-down nor gossamer is flowing,  
So lull'd in languid indolence the  
world.

And mute the farms along the purple  
valley,

The full barns muffled to the beams  
with sheaves;

You hear no more the noisy rout and  
rally

Amongst the tenant-masons of the  
eaves.

A single quail, upstarting from the  
stubble,

Darts whirring past and quick alight-  
ing down

Is lost, as breaks and disappears a bubble,  
Amid the covert of the leafy brown.

The upland glades are flecked afar in  
dapples

By flocks of lambs a-gambol from the  
fold;

The orchards bend beneath the weight of  
apples,

And groves are bright in crimson and  
in gold.

But hark ! I hear the pheasant's muffled  
drumming,

The water murmur from a distant dell;  
A drowsy bee in mazy tangles humming;  
The far, faint tinkling tenor of a bell.

And now from yonder beech trunk sheer  
    and sterile,  
    The rat-tat-tat of the wood-pecker's  
    bill;  
The sharp staccato barking of a squirrel,  
    A dropping nut, and all again is still.

A WINTER MORNING.

STILL LIFE.

YOU have seen a winter morning,  
The horizon dull and low,  
When the earth and all belonging  
Lay a level waste of snow.  
In the drear and empty distance  
There was naught of all we knew,  
Save the gaunt and naked poplars  
To arrest the wand'ring view.  
It was as a stretch of desert  
With no sign of life thereon—  
The familiar hills and hollows  
And the fields and fences gone;  
Every road and lane and by-way,  
Far and near were blotted out,

Hushed the sound of bells and silent  
    Were the huntsman's gun and shout;  
E'en the axes of the choppers  
    Were unheard amid the wood,  
And in drifts the horse of iron,  
    With his train imprisoned stood.  
Save but once across the heavens,  
    When there flew a single crow,  
Not a motion broke the blankness  
    Of the muffled world of snow.

AN APRIL MORNING.

I HAVE seen an April morning  
When the ling'ring winds were lain,  
And the day arose triumphant  
From a sun-lit gush of rain !

When the uplands and the lowlands,  
And the woodlands far and wide,  
From the bonds of icy fetters  
Were unloosed and glorified.

Wheresoe'er the eye would wander  
There was naught but what was fair ;  
There was scent of balm and balsam  
In the clear, refreshing air.

There were rivulets of silver

In the valleys; there were gleams  
Through the soft empurpled distance  
From the dash of mountain streams.

I could hear the new wine beading

In the saplings, and I knew  
There was jubilee in elf-land,  
From the horns the fairies blew.

Every germ with life was quick'ning

Into green above the mold,  
Every bud a leaf and blossom  
Was beginning to unfold.

There was promise in the furrow,

In the hatching of the brood,



In the heifer growing clumsy  
From approaching motherhood.

E'en the old were feeling younger  
With a brighter hope in view,  
As the happy-hearted robin  
Sang the song forever new.

Just as when it broke in concert  
With the brooklet as it purled  
Through the dewy blooms of Eden  
On the morning of the world.

## AN AUGUST AFTERNOON.

## ON THE FARM.

I N stifling mows the men became oppressed,

And hastened forth hard breathing  
and o'rcome;

The hatching hen stood panting in her  
nest,

The sick earth swooned in languor and  
was dumb.

The dust-dull'd crickets lay in heedless  
ease

Of trampling hoofs along the beaten  
drives,

And from the fields the home-returning  
bees,

Limp wing'd and tired, lit short before  
their hives.

The drooping dog moped aimlessly  
around;

Lop'd down, got up, snapt at the  
gnats; in pits

Knee deep, the tethered horses stamped  
the ground,

And switched at bot-flies dabbing yel-  
low nits.

With heads held prone the sheep in hud-  
dles stood

Through fear of gads—the lambs, too,  
ceased to romp;

The cows were wise to seek the covert  
wood,

Or belly deep stand hidden in the  
swamp.

So dragged the day, but when the dusk  
grew deep

The stagnant heat increased ; we lit  
no light,

But sat out-doors, too faint and sick for  
sleep ;

Such was the stupor of that August  
night.

BEFORE HARVEST.

ON my good steed, at early morn,  
Along the green-walled lanes I ride,  
The land is dark on either side  
With fields of deep, abundant corn.

From end to end the plowman wades  
Breast high between the mile-long  
rows,  
As through the sea, behind him flows  
A flashing wake of two-edged blades.

And still beyond the darker range  
A fairer sight mine eyes behold,  
From lighter green to glimpsing gold,  
The heaving wheat begins to change.

And farther on, where lands are low,  
The timothy is all amidst  
Of airy bloom in amethyst ;  
The amplest mows will overflow.

NOVEMBER.

QUATRAINS.

I.

THE longer days no more appear,  
The shorter fly on quicker wings,  
Night cometh, and the poet sings,  
It is the evening of the year.

Sings of the sundown, with a sigh  
Of pity for the tender call  
Of yonder quail—the last of all  
The scattered covey left to cry.

Sings, as abroad the waning light,  
    The shadows into darkness creep,  
    As from the uplands troop the sheep  
To safer folds against the night.

Sings, as the cows come lowing near,  
    The sweet bell tinkling down the path;  
    The frost has nipped the aftermath,  
It is the evening of the year.

## II.

November is not all a shrew,  
    She hath her noons of mellow airs,  
    Her limpid mornings; and she wears  
Of all the months the deepest blue.



So calmly deep, a leaflet caught  
Hangs dead, but loosened round and  
round,  
Floats slowly eddying to the ground,  
As noiseless as unspoken thought.

The halos, too, belong to her  
Of glittering sunsets, clear and keen;  
The fields aflowing far between  
With film of silvery gossamer.

The gold-touch'd purpling hills, the hush,  
The hazel thicket and the glow  
Of scarlet sumac, deep'ning so,  
I think me of the burning bush!

III.

The farmers haul their grain to town  
In jolting wagons—driving slow  
They talk of prices—say they're low,  
When every tree has shaken down

Its mellow fruit in sixty fold,  
And every acre of their fields  
Where sickles clicked, have proffered  
yields

The thrashing engines beat to gold.

Yet, still they talk, as loads appear  
So great, their teams can hardly pull;  
To-day I counted, plump and full,  
A thousand kernels to the ear!

A thousand kernels! why not lift  
A song of trust and triumph then,  
Hast thou not reap'd—my fellow-men,  
As thou hast sown—in peace and thrift?

## IV.

The season hath her churlish moods,  
But yesterday the air was bland,  
A hazy languor wrapt the land,  
A purple raiment veiled the woods.

But in the night an eastern gale,  
With freezing rain, arose and beat  
The roofs and window panes with sleet,  
Till all the world was clad in mail.—

So glassylike, at morn I found

    If one but touch'd a twig, its case

    Of ice fell shelling, like a vase

Of fragile crystal, to the ground.

There came a snapping from the stalks

    Where cattle fed; if there but hopped

    A blue-jay in the pines, there dropped

A shower of needles to the walks.

V.

The fields are naked, and the wood

    The burthen of the leaf has cast ;

    The low-hung sky is but a vast

Expanse of bleak infinitude.

The trail of smoke the engine made,  
Hard panting past, an hour ago,  
Unbroken still and hanging low  
Along the length of heavy grade;—

The dullness brooding as a pall,  
Alike at morning and at noon,  
The wan-like rim that girts the moon  
From night to night, betoken fall.

There'll be a snow, the farmer says ;  
Uptaking reins, and pulling down  
His muffled cap, drives out of town  
Fast homeward by the nearest ways.

VI.

The dark, wet earth begins to freeze,  
That now the fog so long adrip  
From every eave and pendant tip,  
Is clearing in the nipping breeze.

The roads are griped, as in a vise,  
The hoof-prints lipping to the brim,  
Like swollen pools, from rim to rim,  
Are shot with javelins of ice;—

That closing fast will prove to be  
Deceptive pits that split and break,  
At every step the horses take,  
Up-spurting mire unto the knee.

The load at best is hard to pull,  
Say naught when lab'ring up the steep  
The clogged wheels drag half-axle  
deep!  
Nay, spare the lash, be merciful.





## WAR ECHOES.

*Though o'er them rolls the restless main,  
And lichens lace their tombs in green,  
And though we call the roll in vain  
Across the years that crowd between,*

*Immortal memory, strong and true,  
Will keep their deeds, and as the sun  
In golden lustre lights the blue,  
So shine will they till earth is done.*

THE DRUMS.

O WITH pomp of plumes and banners,  
Ye may blow your cornets sweet,  
But the airs that moved a nation  
Were the tunes the drummers beat.

You remember how they thrilled us,  
As we heard in other years,  
When Rebellion smote the Union,  
And she called her volunteers?

How "The Gates of Edinboro,"  
For the feet a rhythm played,  
And "The Girl I Left Behind Me"  
In the heart a swelling made?

How the smith with lifted hammer  
    Heard a moment, caught the time  
Struck his anvil into chorus,  
    As a ringer rings a chime?

How the mower paused and pondered—  
    He so young and leal and lithe—  
As he tapped a martial ditty,  
    With his whetstone on the scythe?

And the mason scarce had caught them,  
    From the keystone on the arch,  
Ere he dropped his line and plummet,  
    And took up his line of march.

Not a loyal ear but hearkened,  
    Not a soul afraid to dare;

There were pale lads from the counters,  
Brave hearts from everywhere.

There were choppers from the timber,  
Leaving half unhewn the sill;

There were plowmen from the furrow,  
There were grinders from the mill.

There were fathers, poor and needy,  
Brought the help of their old age ;  
There were sweethearts bade their lovers  
Write their names on glory's page.

And among them all a widow  
With her eldest and her stay,  
How she kissed him as she bless'd him;  
And with wet eyes went her way?

Till at length the full battalions  
     Stood aligned in shining blue,  
 When the "forward march" was spoken  
     And the fifes struck up anew  
 With "The Girl I Left Behind Me"—  
     And as when the tempest comes—  
 With rattling hail and thunder-booms  
     In broke the doubling drums.  
 Every footfall caught the rhythm,  
     Every heart in valor beat,  
 As the column swept unbroken  
     Like a flood-tide through the street,—  
 Swept unbroken and beyond us,  
     With the drums still throbbing far,  
 For the harvest must be gathered  
     In the scarlet fields of war.

MAY THIRTIETH.

I.

O COMRADES, though in thick'ning  
green,

Your lowly graves the grasses screen ;

And years are long since last we met,

With all the change that years beget,

There's naught of life or time between

To woo away remembrance yet;

Nor naught that is, nor is to be

Hereafter, shall your valor stain;

For all abundant as the sea,

And steadfast as her broad domain,

So is the Nation's love for thee.

II.

And lo! upon this hallowed day—

    The sweetest e'er to sorrow born—

We seem to wake afar away,

    As oft we woke at early morn

In other years, again to hear

The gath'ring sounds of battle near;

    The stormy drum's redoubling beat,

The bugle's swift, defiant peal;

    The sharp commands, the hurrying  
feet

Of must'ring squadrons, as they wheel

    And league themselves in grim array,

    To storm the valiant hosts of gray!

The word to charge, that breaks the pause

Of dread suspense, the wild huzzahs,



As forth the phalanx springs and runs  
Full front upon the flaming guns!  
As when against a headland steep  
A billow strikes and strews the deep  
With warring breakers, even so,  
The column breaks against the foe,  
When man and man in all the heat  
And might of fiery fervor meet,  
And hand to hand with naked blade  
And bayonet, fight undismayed,  
The weaker yielding only when  
Have fallen half their valiant men;  
Their cannon gone, their colors lost,  
They smite for every inch they yield,  
Until, alas! at fearful cost  
The stronger win the sanguine field.

III.

And so a grateful people come,  
 With martial step to fife and drum,  
     And cornets sounding silver strains,  
     Along a thousand crowded lanes ;  
 We come when spring in fullness  
     breathes  
     The wooing airs of summer's dawn ;  
 With plumes of fir and cedar wreaths  
     Dark green, that smell like Lebanon ;  
 We come with roses and the bells  
 Of lilies and with asphodels,  
     And flower-de-luce in beauty blown,  
 And violets so frail and dear,  
 That each beseems a blossomed tear  
     That God had cherished for His own.

We bring them fresh of tint and hue,  
And all aglint with sun-lit dew  
And lay them in their sweet perfume  
With tender touch on every tomb ;  
And in lagoons and water-ways,  
In lakes and harbors and in bays,—  
    From every fortress on the steep,  
And stately ship where cannon frown  
We let a fragrant garland down  
    For all who slumber in the deep.

Sleep, comrade, sleep, on sea or land,  
    There's not a palm-full of your clay,  
    So hidden, but a blossomed spray  
Is drop't by some remembering hand.

For thee the healing rains of spring  
    Fall earlier that the grass may grow ;

The flowers in daintier fullness blow,  
The robin redbreasts sweeter sing.

For thee we lift the granite high,  
The graven urns of marble set ;  
Their silver lutes the poets fret  
To dulcet strains that never die,

Sleep, comrade, sleep, there lurk about  
No ambush'd foe to fear or shun,  
The Blue and Gray are one-and-one,  
And all the fires of camp are out,

Sleep, comrade, sleep, nor dream again  
The vague uneasy dreams of life,  
Sleep all forgetful of the strife  
The sleep that lulls away your pain.

Sleep, comrade, sleep and dream of bliss,  
The night of death is calm and deep,  
The war is over, sleep the sleep  
That wakes no more to weariness.

Sleep, comrade, sleep in earth's green  
breast,  
There's none to trouble, fear no ill,  
The night of death is sweet and still,  
Sleep on in the eternal rest.

## THE HALT.

THE day was lost, and we were sent  
In haste to guard the baggage  
train,

And all the night through gloom and  
rain

Across a land of ruin went.

But halting once, and only then

We turned aside to let the corps

Of ambulances pass before,

That hauled a thousand wounded men !

And leaning, drowsy and oppressed,

Upon my gun I wondered where

The comrade was I helped to bear,

Slow rearward, wounded in the breast.

When lo ! I heard a fainting cry—

As wheels drew near and stopped  
aside :

“The man in here with me has died,  
Oh, lift him out, or I shall die !”

“All right,” the one-armed driver said,  
“The horse can hardly pull the load,  
We leave them all along the road,  
It does no good to haul the dead !”

And so we turned by lantern light  
And laid him in a gloom of pines,  
When came an order down the lines,  
“Push on, and halt no more to-night !”

FRANKLIN, TENN.

NOVEMBER 30, 1864.

HARD pressed, we fell back upon  
Franklin, called a halt  
And broke ground in hot haste, to with-  
stand the assault  
That we knew would be swift as a whirl-  
wind, and fought  
Without quarter.

Howe'er, we were vet'rans,  
and wrought  
As for life; fences were leveled, bridges  
seized, aids  
Sent with sharp orders, trains hurried  
forward, brigades



Double-quick'd to the trenches where  
batteries were set

With the guns loaded plumb to the muzzles,  
and yet,

Not a moment too soon !

For the foe had been massed  
And were dark'ning the hills, and although  
we had passed

Through a hundred encounters, a hush  
as profound

As the silence of death brooded ominously  
'round,

As we stood in amaze and beheld the  
dark sweep

Of battalions, interleagued to battalions  
—six deep—

Aye, the whole rebel army, pouring  
    forth from the wood,  
Forty thousand, in battle array under  
    Hood,  
Forty thousand, a gray and grim steel-  
    fronted host  
Sweeping forward, as dark waters sweep  
    to the coast  
Ere dashed into breakers, until they, with  
    a shout,  
Like the noise of the sea in its fury, broke  
    out  
And leaped forward !  
And yet, there we stood helpless, nor  
    dared fire a shot :  
Two brigades by a blunder misplaced had  
    been caught

Right between the two fronts, nor were  
cleared from the way

Till hundreds fell captive, and the onset-  
ting fray

Struck the works by the pike and poured  
through, when Opedyck

Caught a glance of the route, and flash-  
ing his blade

From the scabbard, called out to as game  
a brigade

As ever faced bullets, "Up and at them,  
my men !"

When the lightnings leaped forth, and it  
thundered; and then

To the bayonets bent, right forward we  
broke

Through the hail-whistling flame of their  
    volleys and smoke,

Till we met with a clash in a hand-to-  
    hand fight,

Beat them back foot by foot, through the  
    breach, yet in spite

Of the might of our valor, and the roar  
    and the rack

Of that tempest of death, they wheeled  
    round in their track—

All afire from our cannon,—and again  
    and again

Re-enforced with dark masses of oncom-  
    ing men

Stormed the line of our works.

Why repeat? You have read of the deeds  
of that day  
In the records of valor; how we held them  
at bay,  
As the sea-walls the breakers; of how  
they were led  
Till the sweeps of their charges were  
strewn with the dead;  
Of the fronting platoons that were mown  
from their feet,  
Of the gaps that were filled with no  
thought of retreat  
Until corps after corps were bereft of the  
pride  
Of their heroes: of how they were shot  
from astride

The embankments, cut down in the  
breach, in their raids  
On the colors, 'round the guns, till their  
scattered brigades  
Could be rallied no longer, and stricken  
and sore,  
With their captains unhorsed and their  
swiftest no more,  
Their banners in tatters, their standards  
in two,  
Aye, whipped but not conquered, at last  
they withdrew,  
And the slain of the Gray and the slain  
of the Blue,  
Were as one as they lay under night's  
heavy pall  
With the flag of the Union afloat over all.

THE FOND HEART'S BENEDICTION.

DECORATION DAY.

A GAIN we file into the camp  
Wherein they bivouacked last  
And as we call the roll they file  
In solemn silence past.

We come with songs in minor keys,  
We come with eye-lids wet,  
We come with lilies of the vale  
We bring the violet;

We come with wreaths of Sharon's rose,  
With fragrant heliotrope;  
We come with steadfast, loyal hearts,  
With golden-anchored hope;

We come with snow-flakes in our beards,  
     With winter in our hair,  
 Yet still the flag in hallowed trust  
     With valiant hands we bear.

And when we're gone our sons and theirs,  
     Heroic, strong and proud,  
 Will in the vanguard step  
     And lift it flowing to the cloud.

We come with those we left as babes—  
     Fair women now are they—  
 Who wove the dewy garlands lain  
     Upon your graves to-day.

We come with fathers, hoar and frail,  
     With mothers, bent and low,  
 And little children in whose hands  
     The blue-bells overflow.



Aye, old and young, in sun and shade,  
From sea to sea we come;  
The plow stands idle in the field,  
The doors are shut at home.

We come from hamlets and from towns,  
In hosts along the lanes;  
From factories in great cities  
Where a Sabbath's stillness reigns.

We come in summer's rosy dawn,  
The green woods dark'ning near,  
When orchards drop their bloom and  
round  
The young fruit into sphere.

We come when bees are on the wing,  
In airy halcyon hours;

We come with faith, and love as sweet  
And tender as the flowers;

When oriole and bobolink  
From every mound and tree,  
And robin-redbreast flute their notes  
In dulcet melody.

We come rejoicing and in tears,  
In fondness and in trust,  
We kneel above their hallowed mounds  
And kiss the very dust.

And so we give to them the best  
We have in heart and words,  
And leave them sleeping sweetly  
With the blossoms and the birds.

ON OCCASION.



A GOLDEN WEDDING.

TO-NIGHT we turn and feign would  
call

To mind the smiles and tears  
That flecked with dappled light and  
shade

A life of fifty years—  
A wedded life of willing hands  
That drudged from sun to sun,  
And each succeeding morn anew  
Took up the work undone.

'Twas plow and plant and gather in,  
Again to plow and sow;  
The threaded shuttle through the loom  
Went ever to and fro ;

It was a constant treadmill tramp—  
    Around and still around;  
And though the mill forever went,  
    The grist was never ground.

But this were well, for, as the times  
    And seasons kept their speed,  
Came restless little feet to shoe,  
    And little mouths to feed—  
Mouths craving bread, and busy hands  
    In every mischief thrust;  
They made the usual pies of mud  
    And pattered in the dust.

To fall and stub the bootless toes  
    Was ever boyhood's fate,  
And fingers just as sure were pinched  
    While swinging on the gate;

The smoothly polished cellar-door  
Was proof beyond a doubt  
Of how the pants were worn in holes  
Below the roundabout.

Yet there was mother, deft and quick  
To knit and darn and mend;  
She soothed the ache and bound the  
bruise—

Her love was without end.  
With constant care her faithful eye  
Was never turned away  
From watching o'er the truant feet  
So prone to run astray.

The first one born was little Jim—  
A most a precious chick;

The classic precinct of his birth  
     Was down on "Shaver's Crick."  
 At times across his back and legs—  
     To cure the itch of sin—  
 Was lain the rod's corrective salt—  
     They must have rubbed it in!

But as he grew he often caught  
     A glimpse of sunny gleams,  
 And heard the pulsing silver sounds  
     Within the land of dreams;  
 And in the night, when all was still,  
     Lay musing late and long,  
 Until he caught the magic spell  
     And wove them into song.

The next on deck was wayward Bob,  
     The drollest of the crew.



How often! oh, how often

Has he pinched us black and blue!

He went in manhood to the war,

And fought as he had pinched,

And when a bullet pierced his thigh

He swore but never flinched.

And then poor John in order came,

Kindhearted, dashing, free;

I never knew of one so full

Of sanguine hope as he—

A hope that turned aside and smiled

At grim misfortune's frown,

Until, alas! in dark eclipse

His noon-day sun went down.

And there was David, who, when grown,

In manly beauty stood—

A type of rounded strength, as stands

A young oak in the wood.

His heart was glad, and when the drums

Were beating far and wide,

He marched—a soldier—to the front

And, fighting, fell and died.

The next was Edwin, who from birth

Walked in his Maker's ways,

And kept in simple, faithful trust

His precepts all his days;

And when at length a dread disease

Its fatal course began,

He met it—dying as he lived—

At peace with God and man.

Then Bell in turn—a laughing lass—

One summer's day was born.

The light that lit her nature seemed  
A reflex of the morn.

Consumption! dread destroyer!

Thou hast claimed her for thine own.  
White souls there are; a whiter one  
Than hers I've never known.

Then on one snowy New Year's eve  
In came a gift from heaven;  
'Twas little, brown-eyed Sara-Jane,  
The best of all the seven.

A faithful daughter she has been,  
A sister true and sweet;  
Her feet were swift to run, her heart  
In loyal kindness beat.

In mother's stead she sewed and baked,  
And scoured and cleansed the cup;

In sickness bathed the fevered brow  
    The faint head lifted up.  
And still she's here to-night to share  
    The burthens yet unborne—  
The strength and stay of these old forms  
    So weary and outworn.

So weary with the dizzy whirl  
    The turmoil and the strife,  
The aches, the longings and the cares  
    Of this uneasy life;  
So weary trudging up the hill,  
    So weary plodding down,  
So broken underneath the cross.  
    So anxious for the crown.

Ah, well! we know the crown's in store;  
    The rugged path you trod.

And, oh! it must be beautiful—

The city of our God.

Has life not sweets to lure you still?

The loved ones power to bless?

Long as we may for heavenly halls,

We love not earth the less.

Oh, then, dear heaven! hold not thy  
charms,

And let the sun benign

In Indian summer loveliness

Upon them softly shine;

Stay winter's coming, and when come

Keep back the fall of snow.

We'll love and bless them while they  
stay,

And bless them when they go.

## AN EASY CHAIR.

FOR DR. A. W. ARMSTRONG.

## I.

DOCTOR, take this easy chair;  
Soft its cushion as a fleece;  
For an hour forget thy care,  
For an hour thy labor cease.  
Let the sun of heaven shine  
Still in love on thee and thine,  
Staying long his going down,  
Is the fond and fervent prayer  
Of every heart that beats in town.

## II.

Thou art worthy, and hast been  
To thy stricken fellow-men  
Faithful all thy lengthened years—  
Faithful to them in their tears  
And unto the bed of pain  
Thou wert never called in vain;  
    Never was the day too warm,  
Nor the night too dark with rain,  
    Nor too wild the winter's storm,  
Nor too deep the drifted snow,  
But that thou didst willing go;  
Never patient yet so poor  
But was welcome at thy door.

## III.

Often have you been the stay  
Of our dear ones as they lay

Struggling in the mortal throes—

Which alone a mother knows—

    In the trying hour of birth;

Heard the first awak'ning cry

    Of our children, new to earth.

You have seen them bright of eye,

Seen them at their nimble play,

Seen them grow and go their way,

    Seen them fade and droop and die;

Cheered us all when faint and low;

Laid your hand on wrist and brow;

Timed the life-tide's ebb and flow,

Cooled the fever of the brain

With draughts of healing, as the rain,

Show'ring, woos the arid plain

Back to living green again.



IV.

Eighty years are thine, and, though  
White thy head is as the snow,  
And the days since first we met  
Lengthened to the long ago,  
Thou art true to duty yet,  
Just as if you were not old;—  
True to Him who guides the way  
And shall call thee to the fold  
Ere long when thy work is done  
Peaceful at the set of sun.

V.

Howsoe'er, sit down and rest;  
Soft the chair is as a fleece;  
Set thee down and rest in peace.  
Golden is the languid west;

Indian summer round thee shine,  
Health and wealth to thee and thine.  
Sit thee down and rest in ease;  
    Let thy dreams be dreams of bliss;  
Little children climb thy knees,  
    Archly giving kiss for kiss.  
Doctor, thou art truly blessed!  
Take the chair, sit down and rest.

## JO LEEPER.

FORTY years ago, or nigh,  
Barefoot boys were Jo and I.  
I a child and he a child,  
Here, when all the grove was wild;  
Played together every day—  
In the straw rick, in the hay;  
Hunted birds' eggs, went to school,  
And a-swimming in the cool,  
Deep, delicious willow pool,—  
Now dried up, with just the stumps  
To show where grew the willow clumps.  
There's change! The creek sinks in its  
bed;  
I am tired and Jo is dead.

He so lithe and fleet and strong,  
Built, we thought, for living long.  
Better boy was never known,  
Nor a better man when grown;  
Kindly-hearted, boy-like still,  
Thought no evil, spake no ill,  
Peaceable—he knew no strife,  
Even-tempered all his life.  
Loved to romp and laugh and joke,  
Uncomplaining took the yoke  
When others fainted. Noble heart!  
Well he filled a brother's part.  
Lay him gently down to rest;  
He deserves it; God knows best.

FROM THE ALBUM

OF MISS INA ALLEN.

MY friend! your life is in the May,  
The wine of spring is in your  
veins;

And like this virgin page, I pray,  
It e'er may be as free from stains.

Ah, me! but May is fleet of wing;  
She is too sweet to go so soon,—  
We hardly hear the robins sing  
Before she hies away to June.

Though June is dear, we sigh withal  
Amid her lavish sweets to know  
That summer nimbly seeks the fall;  
Then comes the winter with its snow.

Still, when the winter of your years  
    Shall come, 'twill sweeter be than  
        spring;  
'Tis peaceful age alone that hears  
    From earth the bells of heaven ring.

FROM THE ALBUM

OF MISS LIBBIE HAMSHIRE.

MY dear young friend! your life is  
sweet,

Your virtue spotless as the snow;  
Your hands are deft, and swift your feet;  
I wish that God would keep you so.

Howe'er, we may not bind the years,  
Nor from our course the shadows bar,  
But Age forgets his pains and tears  
When hope becomes the guiding star.

And as it shown in times of old,  
And led the shepherds glad and wise,  
For you it streams a rain of gold  
Across the hills of Paradise.

154      *The Green Leaf and the Gray.*

And—trust me, friend—I wish that you  
    With willing feet may hither tend,  
And keep as they the star in view  
    Till Jesus meets you at the end.



## JOSIE.

AH, Josie! We're weary with sighing  
O'er the thought that you'll come  
nevermore,

But rejoice that the sweetness of dying  
Was a balm for the suff'ring you bore.  
For we knew by the saintly behavior,  
When approaching the dark river's  
strand,  
And in the light in your face, that the  
Saviour  
Was holding your poor little hand.

It is rapture to know you're together,  
That you'll never grow weary again

In the airs of that beautiful weather  
    That woo away sickness and pain.  
Yet, withal, it is human to weep you,  
    And to see you, oh, what would we  
        give!  
But, my dear little girl, we will keep you  
    In memory as long as we live.

## TOSSINGS.

NOT a wink all night. Toss? I  
should say so!

Turned fifty times, more or less;  
counted sheep—

A great flock disappearing, leap by  
leap,

Over a fence into dreamland; watch'd  
th' flow

Of dim waters; thought myself in a show  
Riding the merry-go-round with a  
sweep

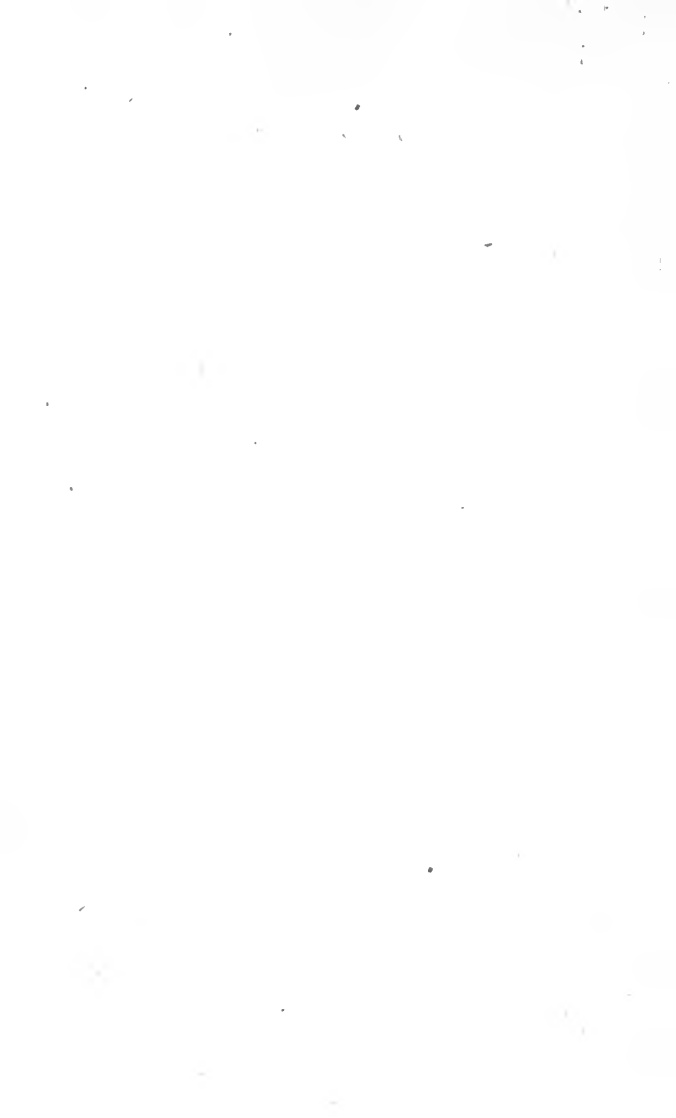
And swirl that made me dizzy; still no  
sleep.

Then I fell to thinking whether or no

There were crumbs in the bed, laughed,  
    blamed the seams  
In the sheets; got up and turned them,  
    unfast  
The blinds; again lay down, longing  
    for dreams  
And sweet slumber that came not. till  
    at last,  
Just as across the hills the daybreak crept  
And the redbreasts sang of morning, I  
    slept.







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